ARAMBE FLAME

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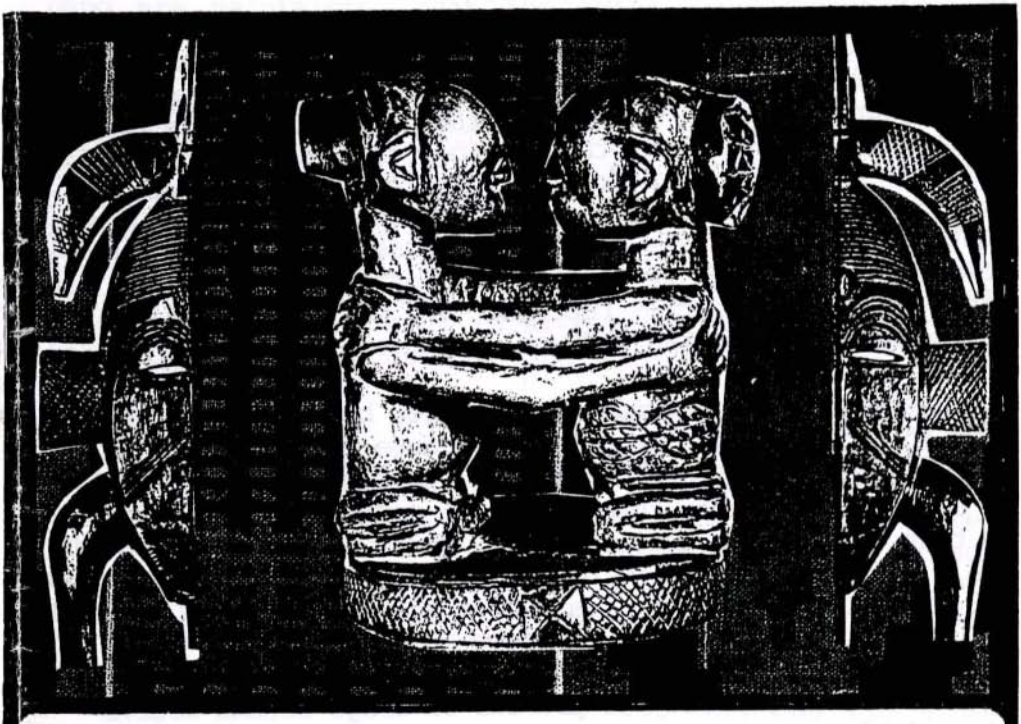

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

COMMENTARY

U.S. Politics: Rolling of the Two-Sided Dice

In a few days, these public hearings before the 9/11 Commission will probably be over with. The reported purpose of the hearings is to determine what mistakes might have been made by the Bush regime, and Clinton's before him, that led to the failure of U.S. government agencies to learn of plans for the 9/11/01 attacks and take effective measures to prevent them. Of course, king George and the gang are maintaining that the White House, State Dept., Central Intelligence Agency, etc. did all they could to gather information about al-Qaida and other "terrorist" groups and their possible plans and that they took all appropriate actions to protect the U.S. Former Secretary Treasurer Paul O'Neill and former national coordinator for security, infrastructure protection and counter-terrorism Richard Clarke have come forward to say, among other things, that the Bush regime spent too much time and resources in its obsession with Iraq and that this kept adequate attention from being paid to al-Qaida and credible warnings that it would launch attacks inside this country.

All this has been minimally entertaining theater. And it **is** theater, with the politicians acting and the hearing room functioning as their stage. But this is **not** a coin flip. You see, before a football game starts, there's the flipping of a coin. One team captain calls "heads" and the other calls "tails." It doesn't get much simpler than this. Unless we count the possibility of a coin landing on its edge, it only has two sides. But let's suppose you're rolling dice at a crap table and have been fooled into believing that each of the dice only has two sides. You'd be throwing the dice under a severe handicap. A die is a cube. It has **six** sides. Since you're throwing a **pair** of dice, we're talking about twelve sides, several combinations of numbers, and a grip of possible outcomes.

Those politicians, news directors, reporters, and others who are bringing the 9/11 Commission hearings to us are, in a manner of speaking, fooling the general public into believing that dice only have two sides. So the public is trying to follow the talk coming out of these hearings and is doing so with a handicap.

What is the question that's put before us? Did the Bush regime do enough to protect the U.S. from the 9/11/04 attacks or did it fail to do enough. This two-sided question deals with matters of intelligence-gathering(spying and so forth), agency planning and coordination, covert and overt military actions, etc. Nowhere in these 9/11 Commission hearings and developments related to them has the issue been raised as to what the U.S. government has done to **cause** foreign governments and/or foreign non-governmental groups, such as al-Qaida, to view the U.S. as an enemy to be attacked.

In the rhetoric being spouted by the Bush and Kerry camps about the U.S. occupation of Iraq, one two-sided question being debated is whether the Bush regime actually had evidence of Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction. But we are hearing from neither camp any talk about whether the U.S., as probably the owner of the greatest stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction of any country in the world, has the moral/ethical authority to attack other countries because they might have miniscule amounts of what the U.S. has. We're not hearing from any of the network news programs any discussion of the hypocrisy of this. We're not reading of this in any of the establishment newspapers or magazines. The Congressional Black Caucus isn't talking about this double standard.

On the domestic front, the presidential race is warming up. But the real heat probably won't be generated until after the Demopublican and Republicrat national conventions. The question we African people are being asked by the politicians, pollsters, and media is whether we're going to vote for Kerry or for Bush. The accompanying question is which one we **should** vote for. More of these "two-sided dice." Like others in this country, we are expected to have a view of electoral politics in which the Demopublicans and the Republicrats are the only legitimate parties and the only practical options. Because this is an allegedly "free" country, other political parties are allowed. But the political game is rigged. Election laws are designed to preserve and protect the two-party system. And both the European-run media and school system program into us an inability to see beyond politics-as-usual.

Some Africans in this country have sense enough to understand that the Demopublican and Republicratic parties represent the interests of Europeans(Caucasians) and their wealth. And some among these Africans see beyond the "precious" two-party system insofar as political options for us are concerned. These Sisters and Brothers speak of such options as: an independent political party by and for African people, an independent party(ies) of coalitions between Africans and other brown people, election boycotts, etc. We know these Sisters and Brothers are around. But we don't see them on the television news programs or political talk shows; we don't read interviews with them in the establishment newspapers. These Sisters and Brothers, as far as the heads of the political/economic system are concerned, are "fringe elements." Without doubt, these institution heads want the masses of African people in this country to either not know of these "fringe elements" or see their ideas as loony or impractical. In the meantime, the Demopublicans show us no actual respect and the Republicans give us nothing more than symbolic recognition.

It has been just about a half-century since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Brown vs. Board of Education case. As the anniversary of this ruling gets closer, we will get discussion upon discussion, analysis upon analysis, etc. on the question of to what extent segregation and inequality have been erased in this country's public schools. We'll get polite and not-so-polite debates between African liberals and African conservatives, plenty of analysis by European "experts," and other discourse on how far the school system has come in fulfilling the "promise of Brown vs. Board of Education." Again, it'll be the throwing of the "two-sided dice." We'll be expected to listen to and read this talk about so-called "education" with a mindset by which integration and segregation and equality and inequality are the only issues to consider, or the only issues to consider **seriously.**

In the European-run establishment media, there'll be statistical reports comparing African students' and European students' test scores and their graduation rates, etc.; student/teacher ratios; per-pupil school funding; and other

reports and "expert" speculation on what the implications of these figures are. But there'll be little or no mention or discussion of issues existing outside of the heads-and-tails boundaries. We won't be reading or hearing serious discourse(if any at all) that questions the very **capacity** of the European-run school system--with its European-supremacist curricula--to provide our children and other children of color with an actual **education**, something beyond mere training and indoctrination. We won't be reading or hearing serious and informed discourse(if any at all) on Africentric schooling and African community **control** over schools.

Whether the subject is U.S. government foreign policy, domestic electoral politics, the U.S. public school system, or other topics of importance, we, like the rest of the masses in this country, are functioning at a disadvantage. It's tough for us to play at this "crap table" because we've been taught to "think" only within the limits of the ideas placed in front of us. And because we live in a society rooted in European-supremacist ideas and designed to preserve the power position of Europeans, we can much less afford to "think" within these imposed limits than can Europeans.

Africans who are involved in mass-communications--whether they be newspaper editors or columnists, radio or t.v. program hosts, teachers, whatever--should be making it one of their major pieces of business that of helping us to remove the boundaries that have been imposed on our capacity to see and think as **African** people.

-Editor

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Law Disqualifying Those with Drug Convictions from Federal Student Loans Up for Modification

..."Researchers have discovered and rediscovered that inmates who earn college degrees tend to stay out of jail. But former offenders have found it increasingly hard to educate themselves and gear up for productive lives since Congress began to cut them off from federal education aid in the 1990s.

"...the House of Representatives is at least talking about changing the 1998 law under which more than 140,000 students have been turned down for federal student loans because of drug offenses, some of which are minor and a decade old.

"The law was not supposed to work this way. According to Representative Mark Souder, the Indiana Republican who wrote the measure, it was aimed only at students who committed drug crimes while receiving federal loans. But the law has instead been applied to every applicant with a drug conviction, even if the conviction was so minor as to carry no jail time, and even if it occurred long before the student ever envisioned going to college. Mr. Souder has put forth a revised version of the law that would return to his original intent..."

-from "Oiling the Revolving Door," page 4, May PRISON ART(San Francisco, CA.)

Diet-related Illnesses Plaguing Our Communities

..."According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, 31.1 percent of African-Americans were obese in 2001, up from 19.3 percent ten years ago...CDC Public Health Nutritionist Annie Carr told BET.com that half of all African-American women are obese...

"Obesity poses a serious health threat because it is related to other diseases that affect African-Americans disproportionately: heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes...Right

now 13 percent of all African-Americans have diabetes. Type-II(adult-onset) diabetes accounts for the vast majority (90-95 percent) of the diabetes cases among African-Americans. Type-II is not inherited, and can be treated with better eating, exercise, and medications...

"Common consequences of diabetes can include blindness, kidney failure, or even amputations. In 1994, for instance, approximately 13,000 African-Americans had amputations(usually their feet)...

"Community members have...been getting involved in developing healthy solutions. The African American 5-A-Day Campaign, for instance, encourages people to eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables and to be physically active for at least 30 minutes each day...

"Some people claim that they should not change their dietary habits because soul food is a part of African-American heritage. Dr. Deidre Little-Persson, however, is trying to change perceptions about the African roots of our current meals.

"The nutritionist and author of a book called Fit for Eternity, Little-Persson claims that African-Americans increasingly opted for refined foods over the last couple centuries. Modern African-Americans have departed from the primarily vegetarian traditions of Africa, have added a great deal of fat to meals, and have preferred pre-packaged foods instead of cooking...

"'The crucial element in preventing heart disease and other degenerative diseases is getting back to the foundations of our heritage and eliminating...processed foods', she said..."

-from "Obesity and the African American Community," page 2-B, Apr. 22-28 JACKSON ADVOCATE(Jackson, MS.)

Africans in U.S. Military Over-represented in Iraq War Fatalities

"Just before the start of the Iraq war, Pentagon officials

flatly denied that Blacks would die in greater disproportionate numbers than Whites in the conflict. They noted that Blacks were much more likely to be in administrative and support positions than in frontline elite combat groups such as Special Forces units and the Green Berets...

"According to Defense Department figures, Blacks have died at higher proportions than Whites in the conflict. Seventy-nine of the 550 combat dead...have been Black soldiers. The bloodletting among Black soldiers exceeds the Black casualty rate in the Vietnam and Korean wars.

"The twist is that Blacks might have been less at risk if they had been in Specials Ops, the Green Berets, or other frontline combat units. Blacks make up nearly 50 percent of those in support, supply and service units. In the quick strike, mobile campaign the military waged in Iraq, those units were also exposed to the combat danger at the front.

"...In the first week of the fighting, a dozen Black soldiers were killed either by enemy gunfire during convoy duty or by accidents while driving military vehicles. Seven others were reportedly killed in what appeared to be non-convoy related combat duty...

"The staggering high levels of unemployment for young Black males, grossly falling inner city schools, and the continued disintegration of Black families, make the Army's relentless decade-long 'Be all you can be' pitch irresistable to many poor, young Blacks. The Army is seen as their one, maybe only, chance to learn skills, get a quality education, receive top medical care, earn a pension, and other benefits.

"While ROTC programs have been dumped from, or chased off, numerous major university campuses, they have expanded at Black colleges. Half of all army ROTC commissions received by Blacks are awarded at 21 Black colleges. Also, Blacks hold more management and executive positions in the Army that give them command and decision-making power over Whites than in any other government agency, let alone the corporate world...

"Though polls show that far more Blacks than Whites oppose

the war, and are much more likely than Whites to dismiss Pres. Bush's claims that the war was fought to destroy Iraq's WMD, rid the world of Saddam Hussein as lies, and to restore democracy in Iraq, the war has not stirred ignited mass resistance from Blacks.

"When Pres. Bush launched the war a year ago, Blacks were conspicuously missing in big numbers at anti-war demonstrations. At demonstrations on the first anniversary of the war, they were still just as conspicuously missing..."

-from "Black Death Toll in Iraq Mounts, But not Resistance," page 25, Apr. 20 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Be-All-You-Can-Be Economics

..."Unlike Taco Bell, the Armed Forces offers money for college; but if you read the fine print, it's a complicated story. To qualify for the full Montgomery G.I. Bill, you need to serve four years in active duty and four in the reserves. You have to get an honorable discharge. You also need to pay $100 a month for the first year--$1,200 --just to have the option to get the funding once you leave the military. To get money from the Army Navy College Fund, you need to be a high school graduate, score in the top 50 percent on a standardized test, and take a less-than-desirable job. Two-thirds of recruits never get any college funding. Most who do qualify go to two-year community schools. Assuming that a two-year school costs $4,000 each year, the total payment from the military, minus the $1,200 you already put in, would be $6,800. If you stretched that over the four years of full-time soldiering, that's a lousy 85¢ more each hour for a job that could send you to Iraq indefinitely, earning almost minimum wage..."

-from "Welcome to the Military! May I Take Your Order," page 38, May/June CLAMOR(Toledo, OH)

Growth of Rastafarianism in Cuba and Problems of Image

"Long dreadlocks stuffed into trademark red, black, green and yellow tams, which sometimes carry a symbol of an Afro-Cuban religion or even a U.S. flag, Bob Marley T-shirts

and camouflage pants--that is the typical look of Cuba's young Rastafarians, a growing presence here. The rastas are mainly found in Havana and tend to be young Afro-Cuban men from poor neighborhoods, who seem to carry reggae music in their blood.

"'People don't look on us kindly', says Yosvany Reyes, a 27-year-old craftsman, told IPS. 'In Cuba, people don't know very much about what being Rastafarian means. They generally think we're dirty drug addicts or bums who just wander around the streets not doing anything'...'But being a Rastafarian is a way of thinking, a philosophy, another way of looking at life', he said...

"'There are young people who adopt the Rastafarian symbols as a way to make a living. They know that young Black men who look like us are a great attraction for the tourists', he said. Mr. Reyes complained that these 'false' Rastafarians, who he said are involved in prostitution and drug rackets, are responsible for society's distorted image of the movement.

"Rastafarianism is defined as a religion, philosophy, or world view. Since it emerged in Jamaica in the 1930s, the movement has become truly international, winning followers throughout the Caribbean and the entire world.

"Rastafarian communities believe that Haile Selassie I, emperor of Ethiopia from 1930 until his downfall in 1974... was the incarnation of God on earth, the second messiah. The Bible is their gospel, and they see Africa as the mother of life and birthplace of humanity. Their basic philosophy includes Black empowerment and a rejection of 'Babylon' --the White power structure.

"Rastas also believe that Jah(Go) can be found in every person, and they identify with reggae music as a symbol of spirituality and protest...Rastas neither cut their hair nor comb it...,nor o they eat meat or consume drugs --legal or illegal--with the exception of marijuana, which they consider sacred. They reject homosexuality, abortion and birth control.

"According to Katrin Hansing, an anthropologist at Florida

International University in Miami,...'the movement has been diffused in very unguided an haphazard ways through the medium of culture, particularly music, mediated via technology and consumer capitalism...She describes how Rastafarianism has been adapted, redefined and 'reinvented' in Cuba in accordance with local circumstances...According to the researcher, there are three manifestations of the movement in Cuba: the religious rastas, the philosophical rastas, and the rastas who are making a fashion statement..."

-from "Rastas in Havana Say They're Misunderstood," pages 14 and 35, Apr. 20 THE FINAL CALL

Sidis: Africans in India for Nearly 1,000 Years

..."Here are a people, clearly of African descent, numbering in the tens of thousands living in India as early as 1100 A.D...the Sidis were settled in Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

"The Sidis are descendants of African merchants and sailors who went to India and assimilated Indian culture. They speak Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, and some of their original language of Swahili...

"The Sidis were also, like the Mamelukes of Egypt, slave soldiers...Some of the Sidis became military leaders and administrators; they protected the maharajahs and other lords of state. Today they are largely farmers, unskilled workers and entertainers, though many have become lawyers, teachers, businesswomen, etc...

"The Sidis are classified in India as 'schedule caste' which entitles them to government jobs and support...Though marginalized by the Indian government as tribal in some regions, the Sidis have, with dignity, constructed an identity that has brought them respect and prestige, to some degree. They are viewed as spiritual specialists, healers, sports and dance celebrities...

"By and large, the Sidis are struggling economically...Today, the Sidis are forming their own organizations and working with political parties to voice their issues. They have formulated a unique fusion of African and Indian

Islamic ceremonial traditions. Most consider themselves Indian first, then African. They boast of kinship with Africa and Africans, but esteem Indian culture.

"This group of Black people are not to be confused with the Black 'untouchables' in India, or the original owners of India, the Black Dravidians...

-from "A Little-known Black History--the Sidis of India," page 36, April 13 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Sister in Colombia a Leader in Land-Rights Efforts

"Libia Grueso Castleblanco, a 43-year-old African Colombia civil rights and environmental activist, was presented with the 'Nobel Prize' for the environment: the 2004 Goldman Environmental Prize. Libia's work to free 5.9 million acres of land for African and Indigenous Colombians makes her a 'grassroots environmental heroine', for which she received a 'no strings attached' award of $125,000. Libia joined African North American Margie Richards of Norco, Louisiana, and five other 2004 recipients from a total of six different parts of the world: Accra, Ghana; Bhopal, India; Thilibisi, Georgia; East Timor; Buenaventura, Colombia...

"The 16 million Colombians of African descent have never had title to the land their ancestors lived on for more than 400 years as maroons, enslaved and ex-enslaved people. Law 70, passed in 1991 with determined pressure of Libia and others, grants Afro-Colombians collective land title rights to their ancestral lands. However, title to very little land, if any, has actually been transferred to them so far.

"Libia believes the problem is partly cultural. She explains that traditional Afro-Colombians believe land cannot be owned or fenced in, that land used to gain a livelihood, as in hunting or mining, cannot be transferred to another...

"These values and beliefs are disregarded by influential Colombians who believe in the 'free market', individual

rights, private property, modernization and 'might makes right'. The Colombian government, with U.S. government support through the infamous Plan Colombia, powerful private interests backed by a powerful military, and an equally powerful outlaw paramilitary and a guerrilla army are determined to stop land titling by the African and Indigenous Colombians in spite of Law 70 and Libia and others who fought so hard to get it passed.

"The latest strategy of the African and Indigenous Colombians is to unite individual claims and make joint claim for title to the land, says Carlos Rosero...

"Libia and Carlos...visited Richmond, observing pollution from the Chevron refinery, Oakland, and Hunter's Point, where they observed environmental racism and pollution...Her message is that the struggle to protect people, the environment and biodiversity from corporate modernization is universal."

-from "African Colombian Activist Wins $125,000 Environmental Prize," pages 1 and 11, April 28 SAN FRANCISCO BAY VIEW(San Francisco, CA.)

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Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization Meeting Schedule for the months of May, June, and July: May 1 (Sat.), 4 (Tues.), 15 (Sat.), 18 (Tues.), 29 (Sat.); June 1 (Tues.), 12 (Sat.), 15 (Tues.), 26 (Sat.), 29 (Tues.); July 10 (Sat.), 13 (Tues.), 24 (Sat.), 27 (Tues.). Our Saturday meetings are from 1 to 3 p.m. and our Tuesday meetings are from 6-8 p.m.

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PUBLICATIONS

[In the April edition of the HARAMBEE FLAME, we presented a partial listing of publications addresses sent to us by our brother, Julius Thompson, at the University of Missouri at Columbia. The following is the rest of this listing.]

The Mid-Missouri Yough Mirror
Ahmos Zu-Bolton, Editor
P.O. Box 292
Columbia, MO. 65203

Obsidian III: Literature in the African Diaspora
Afaa M. Weaver, Editor
Gerald Barrax, Poetry Editor
Dept. of English
Box 8105
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, N.C. 27695-8105

Southern Exposure
P.O. Box 230
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

The Sphinx
John I. Harris III, Editor
2313 St. Paul St.
Baltimore, MD. 21218-5234

The Western Journal of Black Studies
E. Lincoln James, Editor
Washington State University
Pullman, WA. 99164-2103

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for submissions--"Freedom Unbound: Art from Within American Gulags." We need your work. Themes to consider are war/imperialism, crime/prisons, and social change/revolution. We will accept art dealing with other topics as well. Please enclose a short personal bio with any work submitted. The deadline for submissions is June 1. The exhibit will run from June 30 to July 4. We reserve the right to refuse work that is racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. For additional information, write to Chantel G. or Tony Young c/o Lawrence ABC; P.O. Box 1483; Lawrence, KS. 66044.

Information about books-to-prisoners programs, write to Prison Book Program, Attn: Debbie; 110 Arlington St.; Boston, MA. 02116. Or call (617) 423-3298.

John Beasley Theatre Presents Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf." The production of this play will run from April 16 through May 9 at the John Beasley Theatre at 3010 Q St. in Omaha. Call the theatre at (402) 444-3446 for performance times, ticket prices, etc.

If you have prison-related concerns you want to express yourself in writing about, send your reports or commentaries to Nebraska Criminal Justice Review, a quarterly publication of Holy Family Church. Send submissions to: Nebraska Criminal Justice Review; Holy Family Church; 1715 Izard St.; Omaha, NE. 68102. 2 other publications accepting submissions of reports and commentaries on prison-related issues are Prison Art(Prison Art Project, P.O. Box 31574, San Francisco, CA. 94131-0574) and Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter(P.O. Box 1911, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-1911).

In the state prison(Lincoln, NE.) chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org., we have as our primary objective "transformation from 'black' malehood to **African manhood.**" We invite you, the members of the African community on the outside, as well as Africans here on the inside, to join us in our efforts to achieve this objective. Call (402) 479-3379 for more information.

BACK IN TIME

"Slavery in Mexico--including Texas--was abolished by a decree of President Vicente Guerrero in 1829 that stated simply:

1st. Slavery is abolished in the republic.

2nd. Consequently, those who have been until now considered slaves are free.

3rd. When the circumstances of the treasury may permit, the owners of the slaves will be indemnified in the mode that the laws may provide. And in order that every part of this decree may be fully complied with, let it be printed, published, and circulated. Given at the Federal Palace of Mexico, the 15th. of September, 1829. Vicente Guerrero To Jose Maria Bocanegra.

The slavery issue became the bone of contention for the white Americans who had been allowed to settle freely in Texas by the Mexican government. From 1829 on, the heads of the government of Mexico saw fit to enforce the antislavery statute. This includes President Antonio Santa Anna, the reviled commander who killed the poor slave masters at the Alamo...

Jim Bowie, Davey Crockett and Colonel William Travis were fighting for something less than honorable reasons in trying to wrench Texas from Mexico...Bowie and his brothers were slave traders. He and his cohorts made it clear that they would bring slavery to Texas once they stole it from Mexican President General Santa Anna, the most respected Mexican leader of his time, having been elected to the presidency 11 times...

"Jim Bowie is widely celebrated in film...as a daring and resourceful adventurer famed for the development and usage of a long-bladed knife which became known as the 'Bowie knife'..."Shortly after the War of 1812, he and his brother Rezin went into business as slave traders with the pirate Jean Lafitte. In the 1820s, they used their profits from the slave trade to become land speculators and eventually

established a sugar plantation with slave labor in Louisiana. Ten years later, they sold that business, and the 82 slaves who worked on it, for $90,000. Bowie took his share of the profits and went to 'Texas' to join Stephen F. Austin's group of Anglo colonists. He then became involved in a scheme to fraudulently acquire land grants from the Mexican government and ultimately garnered thousands of acres of land...

"The Republic of Texas was a natural outgrowth of the Austin colony which brought slavery onto Mexican soil in 1821. In 1825, 25 percent of the people in Austin's colony were slaves and by 1836, there were 5,000 slaves...However, the problem for the slave-owning crowd was that the fledgling national government in Mexico City threatened to restrict or abolish slavery on Mexican land. So the Texas colonists organized a convention in March 1836 to establish the issues for which they would do battle with the Mexican government. In a two-week period they adopted a declaration of independence from Mexico, declared a republic, and produced a constitution for that republic. All of this activity occurred during the siege of the Alamo. The Alamo defenders fought and died for the constitution of the Republic of Texas...

Source: The above passages excerpted from two articles, "Remember Mexico, Not the Alamo" and "Slavery and the Alamo," which appeared in the April 15-21 2004 edition of the Jackson Advocate Newspaper.

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As African men, we commit ourselves to respecting ourselves and each other; to respecting African women; and to respecting our children and youth, and giving them proper guidance.

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Africans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA

Umoja - Unity
Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility
Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics
Nia - Purpose
Kuumba - Creativity
Imani - Faith

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Alaga(Chairman) - Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa

Eso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms/Chairman of Cultural Affairs Committee) - Gwandoya Zuberi Jahi

Olotu Eko(Education Chairman) - Chuma Akinlowan

Eleto(Administrative Chairman) - position unfilled

Akapo(Treasurer) - Montrail Maddox

Akowe(Secretary) - Mosi Bankole

Akewi(Librarian) - Kitwana Musasi Mtundu

HARAMBEE FLAME EDITOR

Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa